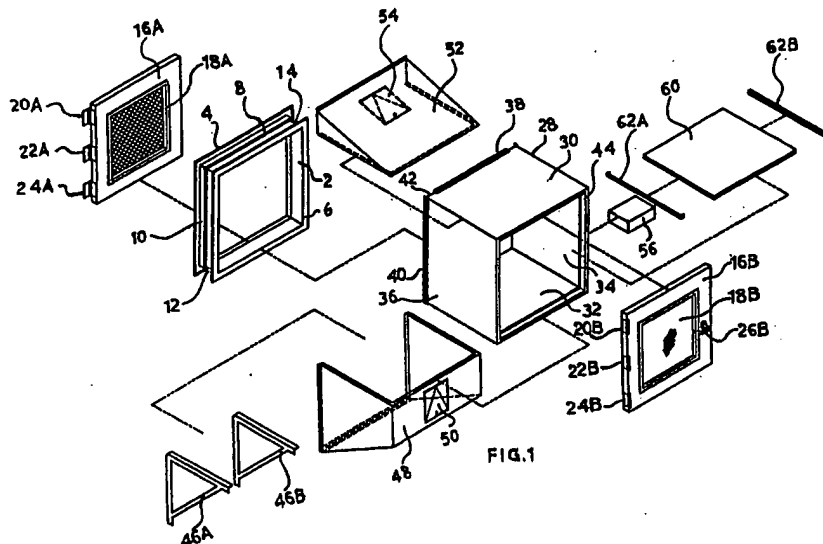


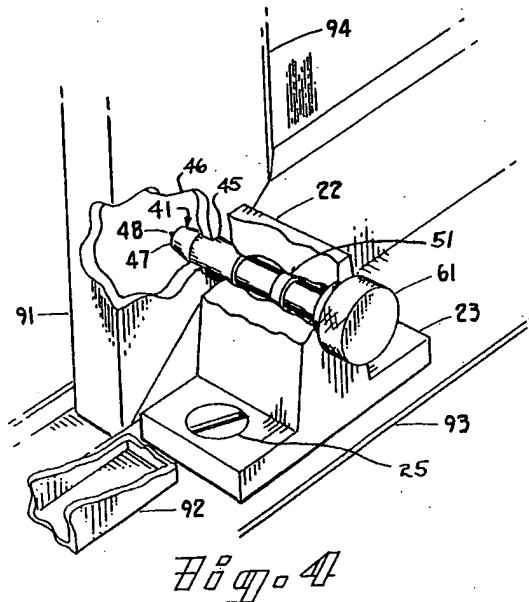
subsequent to the filing of this response. The specification and the drawings were also objected to because of minor informalities. The specification and drawings have been amended to correct these informalities.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-4, 6-8 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,921,191 to Gabel ("Gabel") in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,709,539 to Sodenkamp, Jr ("Sodenkamp").

Gabel discloses a pass through interlock system for sanitized environments shown in FIG. 1 reproduced below. The system includes a frame 2, a first door 16A and a second door 16B. The first and second doors are hinged to frame 2 about hinges 20A and 20B. In use, the first and second doors are unlocked. When either door is opened, the other is programmed to automatically lock.



Sodenkamp discloses a sliding door and window lock shown in FIG. 4 reproduced below including housing 22, base lugs 23, attaching screws 25 and a bolt 41. The lock is attached to a sliding building structure adjacent to the end of a door or window. The bolt can be extended to block the path of the door or window to lock the door or window. Alternately, bolt 41 can be hammered through a portion of a door or window to lock the door or window in a fixed position.



Claim 1 recites an access opening closure device having a housing defining a receptacle and being adapted to be mounted adjacent an access opening in a support structure. A top cover is movably supported on the housing and is movable from a first position covering a top opening of the housing to a second position uncovering the top opening of the housing. An access door is movably supported on the housing. The access door is movable from a first position uncovering a rear opening of the housing to a second position covering the rear opening of the housing. The access door has a plurality of recesses formed along a surface of the door. An engagement member is

supported on the access opening closure device and is movable into engagement with the plurality of recesses to selectively lock the access door at a plurality of different positions.

It is respectfully submitted that neither Gabel nor Sodenkamp, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest the access opening closure device recited in Claim 1. More specifically, neither Gabel nor Sodenkamp disclose or suggest an access opening closure device having a top cover, an access door having a plurality of recesses, and an engagement member which is movable into engagement with the plurality of recesses to selectively lock the access door at a plurality of different positions. As discussed above, Gabel discloses a pass through system for sanitized environments having two hinged doors and Sodenkamp discloses a sliding door lock for locking a sliding door in a single position. Even assuming one would want to modify Gabel in the manner suggested by the Examiner (although there does not appear to be any good reason to do so), Sodenkamp does not disclose any structure to accomplish this. Accordingly, Applicant believes Claim 1 and Claims 2-4, 6-8 and 10 which depend from Claim 1 are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Gabel and Sodenkamp and further in view of U.S. patent No. 5,799,589 to Clark. Clark does not cure the deficiencies of Gabel and Sodenkamp as discussed above. Accordingly, Applicant believes that Claim 9, which also depends from Claim 1, is also in condition for allowance.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that Claim 5 includes allowable subject matter. However, it is respectfully submitted that all of the

Claims now pending in this application, namely Claims 1-20, are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early and favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner feel that a telephone or personal interview may facilitate resolution of any remaining matters, he is respectfully requested to contact Applicant's attorney at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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